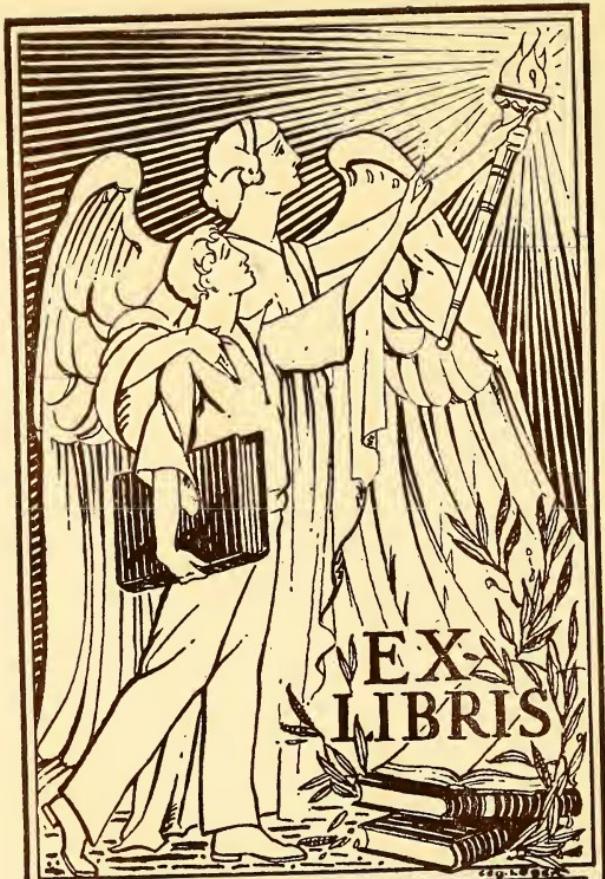


From Me ~ to You

by

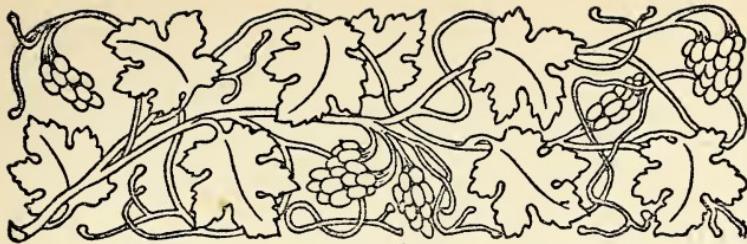
Nellie Patterson



AMERICAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE BLIND INC.



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Poems

By
Nellie Patterson

Dayton, Ohio
1926

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Nellie Patterson
Dayton, Ohio

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Dayton, Ohio

Life Sketch of the Author

The girls of the Lambda Omega Sigma first visited Nellie Patterson a short time before she entered the Incurable Ward of St. Elizabeth Hospital, of Dayton, Ohio. It was at the close of the flu epidemic, the winter of '18 and '19.

In this large ward almost all of the patients were either very aged, feeble in mind or body, or suffering with an incurable disease. She was one of the youngest patients of the ward, very sympathetic, and often longed to escape from those scenes of suffering and death, to more normal surroundings.

She remained at the hospital five years. During this time the club girls visited her regularly, writing many of her letters and doing other acts of kindness. In this way we were brought in touch with her invalid mother, residing at Greenfield, Ohio, Nellie having spent the greater part of her life in and around Greenfield. The mother passed away while she was at the hospital, and it was a great trial not to be able to go to the mother's bedside.

We were also brought in touch with many of her schoolmates of O. S. S. B. (Ohio State School for the Blind), to whom she wrote regularly, and was deeply attached. After losing her sight at age of ten, she spent a number of years at the O. S. S. B., at Columbus, Ohio, receiving an education in music and in the regular school course, graduating in 1901. The associations of the school were so pleasant that their memory was a great source of comfort in the days of her affliction.

The year following her graduation cataracts were successfully removed from her eyes, giving her partial sight. Those happy, wonderful years of partial sight, and comparative health were scarcely five in number, when arthritis, that dreaded, incurable

disease began to develop despite the efforts of medical and surgical skill. She grew more helpless year by year, until she became entirely helpless, once more losing her sight.

Nellie's first realization that she must be an invalid for life was very hard, indeed; then a change came into her life, and she became perfectly resigned, trusting that whatever is, is right. From that time on her courage never faltered. She resolved that if hers must be a life of suffering and sacrifice, cut off from the things in the world, which she had so thoroughly enjoyed, that she would not make it doubly hard for others, especially those who must care for her, by depressing them with her longings and disappointments.

Her daily effort has been to turn her clouds all inside out and show their silver lining. Her great affliction and her unusual cheerfulness is a marvel to all who come in contact with her. She has never felt worthy of the friendship of her large circle of faithful and devoted friends. She loves to think of them as her "Friendship Garden," the personality of each one making special appeal to her affections.

*Lambda Omega Sigma.
Dayton, Ohio*

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Preface

LAMBDA OMEGA SIGMA

If I were wise like Socrates
There'd be much I could say,
My humble lore, bear with it please,
And with my roundelay.

The Lambda Omega Sigma,
My, isn't that a name?
Why, it just sounds like a rigma,
A rigmarole of fame.

Sound does not count, at least this time,
That name means worlds to me.
I cannot tell you in this rhyme
How fine this club can be.

They're pretty girls and good ones too,
And smart as anything.
The boys know this, indeed they do,
How wedding bells do ring.

Then some stay in and some stay out.
Some husbands need more care.
If wife's not there some husbands pout,
Of course we know that's rare.

My club girls did not pick this kind,
Ah no, they're very wise.
When they stay in, I'm sure they find,
That they must early rise.

These girls told me to write a book,
I said: "it is no use,
For who on earth would in it look?"
They said: "that's no excuse.

"If all the folks had that to say,
What would this old world do?"
That's what they said, and so straightway,
I wrote "From Me to You."

MY SPIRITUAL RADIO

I listened to my radio
Day after day, day after day.
The voices there I learned to know,
'Tis in the strangest, newest way.

A mere name does not mean a thing
With personality unknown,
But then to me these voices bring
A personality their own.

Just as the eye will search the face
To read what Life has written there,
The ear has won, an equal place
In helping read Life everywhere.

Say not the truth is veiled in voice,
That fancy builds ideals with zest
Which make us tremble or rejoice
For ah, methinks, voice stands its test.

To me the voice unlocks the soul
And leads me through its chambered halls,
Though often ere I glimpse the whole
In mystery the curtain falls.

A myriad voices call to me,
For nature speaks a varied tongue,
As life unfolds we hear and see
Glories undreamed we've lived among.

I live in dreams. Awake me not.
Reality appals me so
Unless, Sweet Joy! be mine the lot
To help relieve distress and woe.

And in my dreams, my radio
Is no device man's hands have wrought,
'Tis soul transmission, waves aglow
With every phase of life and thought.

So more and more I learn its power
And you, do not you know it too,
And feel that at this very hour
My soul is transmitting to you?

And from a higher Power divine
There comes transmission clear to me,
I listen in, great joy is mine
The more I sense Divinity.

FRIENDSHIP FLOWERS

No more my feet go dancing;
God's world, my eyes see not;
My willing hands lie folded,
Mine is no dreary lot.

For God gave me a garden,
A garden in my heart.
Its flowers are flowers of friendship—
In it, you have a part.

My garden has its roses,
Its lilies, ferns, and there
The Master's hand has planted
His choice flowers, everywhere.

Of all, which is the fairest,
Or which most dear to me?
Each has its special beauty
That only love can see.

Lo! When I most need roses
Such lovely ones unfold,
And when I long for lilies
They show their hearts of gold.

You came into my garden
Just when I needed you,
My flowers. Dear Lord, watch o'er them
When storm clouds cross life's blue.

SEEING YOUR CHANCE

I gave my boys each an apple
One lovely summer's day,
Jack ate his up in a hurry,
Then threw the core away.

Joe, after eating his slowly,
The seeds took one by one
And said o'er that old time jingle
Of love and how 'tis done.

But when Rob ate up his apple—
The seeds he looked all o'er—
To him those seeds had a future
Hid in an apple core.

Today I sit in the garden
Beneath an apple tree,
Grown from those seeds which Rob planted,
Old memories come to me.

For 'round my knees are now playing
Grandchildren who bring back
The day when I gave the apples
To Rob and Joe and Jack.

To Jack it was just an apple,
Joe—apple and then play.
Ah, whence came the inspiration
To Rob that summer's day?

The world is so full of apples,
Apples of chance, you know;
Ofttimes the same chance is given,
But some folks let theirs go.

I walk through life's social garden,
My heart is filled with pain;
Why, why all these wrong adjustments?
Are thought and prayer in vain?

My boys all had the same training,
 My fondest best advice,
And the apples that I gave them
 Were equal in their price.

I love my children all dearly,
 Somehow I fail to see
Why from just one of those apples
 Grows now an apple tree.

The mind conscious and sub-conscious,
 All men must have within;
What starts the inner wheels going
 That makes the great akin?

THE SHARP WORD

Oh, the sharp word, how it rankles!
How it gnaws, and bites, and stings!
How it permeates our being,
Ceaselessly its echo rings!

Oh, the sharp word like an arrow
Sinks into the tender heart
Leaving it all torn and bleeding
Holding still the poison dart!

Oh, the sharp word like an earthquake
Makes upheaval in the soul!
Oft 'tis long e'er reconstruction
Can once more restore the whole!

Oh, the sharp words, could we chain them
That they might not leave the tongue!
Earth would gain a touch of heaven,
Love born souls we'd dwell among!

NOW OR THEN

Wait not to give your roses
 'Till darkness falls;
Wait not 'till life here closes,
 And Heaven calls.

Now is the time for giving,
 While throbs the heart;
Now make life more worth living,
 Now do your part.

A few brief years are given,
 Then come long years
When earthly ties are riven,
 When fall sad tears.

How oft these tears fast falling
 Bring vain regret
Ungiven flowers recalling,
 Ah, to forget.

Each tear of after sadness
 Might be a rose,
A rose of present gladness
 To heal life's woes.

Sad tears or sweet rose beauty,
 Which shall it be?
Seek now your heart's true duty,
 Love's vision see.

A BOY'S SOLILOQUY

I got a little sister Sue,
She'd make a dandy pal.
She'd do most things that I kin do,
But she kan't, for Aunt Sal.

Our Aunt Sal says: "Boys is boys
And girls is girls you see,"
And when girls makes an awful noise,
They're just tomboys, Oh gee!

Aunt Sal don't want boys, enway,
They carry dirt right in,
And do more things than she kin say
If ever she'd begin.

If she'd begin, that tickles me,
Cause that's 'bout all I hear.
So when she starts I think maybe,
I'll try and not be near.

Poor Sue! I pity her a lot
Cause she kan't be a boy,
But then who knows, but like as not
Aunt Sal would spoil her joy.

The neighbor boys has lots uv fun,
Aunt Sal, she wants me straight.
Oh yes! most like George Washington,
Or else I kan't be great.

Ho! George! was he a happy kid?
I'll ask my teacher, yep.
Now she likes boys, she said she did,
She says, some day we'll step.

If ever I get great and grand
I'll fix things fer the boys,
So every boy in this here land
Can have his fun and noise.

Me great! say, won't Aunt Sal be proud?
Oh, I know what she'll say,
"I brought him up," she'll tell the crowd,
"I trained him up that way."

MY DOG

What is the language of Mars?
Ah, to me there comes a stronger appeal,
'Tis that unknown lore with its mystery—
The eyes of my dog reveal.

The wag of his tail at a kindly word,
His crouching fear when I scold,
His matchless devotion my soul has stirred,
No grudge my dog's heart can hold.

His head in my lap he will sometimes lay,
And lick my hand, 'tis his speech,
Then down at my feet, content if he may
Lie close, just within my reach.

And none dare approach me with unkind mein,
Their purpose my dog can tell.
Indeed, his discernment, it is so keen,
That fain would I judge as well.

His feet, do they tire to go where I go?
His big shining eyes ne'er say,
I look in their depths and I long to know
If our life states are fixed for aye.

I sigh, for no book of science I find,
To tell the language I seek,
This wonderful creature, has he no mind?
If only my dog could speak.

Let scientists boast of their wondrous lore,
But fathomless depths remain,
The perfect knowledge, will it come once more?
This hope, it cannot be vain.

THE CAT

Come, let me play with you, Kitty
Are you in mood for play?
Sometimes you just love to frolic,
Frolic the livelong day.

Then sometimes dear little Kitty,
You curl up in the sun,
And scarcely wake to purr a bit,
Until the day is done.

At times you wind about my feet,
You have me play with you,
But then, if I don't stroke you right
Kitty, what do you do?

You purse your back up round and high,
Those paws which seem so soft,
I find to have the sharpest claws,
I've felt their sharpness oft.

And then you spit at me so fierce,
And show those angry eyes,
You seem so soft, so sweet, so meek,
I feel a great surprise.

But, let me lift you in my arms,
And smooth that ruffled fur,
You nestle close in great content,
And softly start to purr.

They say you are not wise at all,
Some things it seems you know,
And many folks are just like cats,
At least, I've found it so.

MY CREED

I'd love to be a fairy,
Possessing magic power;
I'd work some mighty wonders
Each day, yes, every hour.

I see so much of sorrow,
Of pain, and discontent,
My wand would need much waving,
Ere help to all I'd sent.

The world is filled with hunger,
Heart hunger, cries for bread.
To see all needs and fill them
What heart throbs must be read.

I'd find each man a sweetheart,
I'd whisper this to each,
Now learn the sweetest lessons
That life on earth can teach.

If each man had a sweetheart,
Each girl could find her mate,
If there were more real loving,
Less sham, deceit and hate.

Our social fabric woven,
Of golden threads of love.
Ah, me, how much of sorrow
Such magic would remove.

The seed of true ambition
I'd plant in every heart.
I'd make achievement royal
To work for sake of art.

For work's sake, home and country,
What magic I would need
To change the present fashion,
The race for fame and greed

Which makes the rich grow richer,
The poor still poor remain;
Their realms, why need I paint them?
Injustice leaves its stain.

Then all the wrecked of body,
Where pain outweighs their joy,
I'd tip the beam and measure
A life without alloy.

I'd find the poor in spirit,
And make them rich in heart,
I'd teach them life's true meaning,
Who live now but in part.

And out of all the scheming,
Dishonesty and crime,
In thought, in word, in action,
Should grow a love sublime.

For love, were it unfettered,
No fairy's wand I'd need.
Then wrongs would all be righted,
God's love—this is my creed.

MOTHERHOOD

I looked upon a young mother,
In her arms a new babe lay,
That sacred life-giving picture
An angel's hand might portray.

She gazed at the tiny infant—
The wonder that filled her face
Held joy and love of a lifetime,—
What hope was in that embrace.

I stood by a western window
Bathed in a wonderful glow
As the sun gave its benediction
To a world of joy and woe.

My soul was filled with deep worship,
Divinity—where? what? why?
The heavenly look of that mother,
The majesty of that sky.

This other soul just beginning
That day its expression here.
My soul reached farther than reason
And knew what mind saw not clear.

The room, it was plain and humble,
The wealth of true love seen there
Brought thoughts of sham homes, of mansions
With emptiness everywhere.

Thoughts of the arms that are empty,
Of real love missed, which she knew.
I prayed that like her, all women
May home's divine rights hold true.

MOTHER'S DAY

May trips in like a fairy,
Each step she leaves a flower
Which makes the grass seem greener,
And adds to nature's dower.

She woos the gentlest breezes
To play with her awhile,
She coaxes just right sunshine
To give her flowers a smile.

Then, when the world is lovely,
This fairy month of May
Proclaims that all is ready
To honor Mother's Day.

Ah, Mother's Day, what means it
To all the world and me?
Words fail would they portray it,
'Tis love's own symphony.

The theme is far too sacred
For this poor pen of mine,
Each heart has its own story
Of Mother love divine.

MY MOTHER

How vain were my words would I paint the soul
Of my Mother, none could e'er sense the whole.
Her big brown eyes that were always ashine
Were lit with a radiance that was divine
And its light o'er spread her sweet quiet face
'Till you felt, more than saw its wondrous trace.

My little girl Mother, a child in years,
Took up her life struggle, its hopes, its fears,
With a simple, trustful patient desire
To humbly serve, nor did she e'er aspire
To be a leader amongst the vast throng
To walk through fame's halls singing victory's song.

Home was her world and her children her all,
Not for one moment failed she duty's call,
Giving her life as a true Mother will
To help build the future and so fulfill
What life requires to go on and to be.
Who, more than Mothers help make destiny?

'Twas in my childhood her untiring hands
Were folded in answer to Fate's commands,
And, though through long years she was with us still,
Her brave spirit only obeyed her will,
Keeping the smile and the light in her eye,
Cheering and strengthening all who passed by.

So patient, with no complaint of her lot,
If Fate had robbed her, she spoke of it not.
Through books she communed with all forms of life,
She knew its conquests and she knew its strife.
Her flowers made a world none fairer could be.
Shut in her body, her spirit went free.

The good and the great of all lands, all climes,
Through her books appeared as her guests betimes.
Through others' travels o'er the sea she rode
And mid scenes of beauty made her abode.
Her life seemed not narrow, but big and wide
Though life's choicest gifts to her were denied.

What was the secret of her peace, her rest?
Her faith faltered not when put to the test,
But drew her more close to the love Divine
Whose fellowship kept her great soul ashine.
She had found her God, so the best of earth
Was added to her with a greater worth.

And then, when she answered the last command
Those who watched felt somehow a loving hand
Gently, so gently reach down for her soul
To guide it in safety up to its goal.
That something most sacred had come and gone,
Her beautiful spirit lives on and on.

LIFE'S GLAD GAME

A child of Nature, pure and sweet,
Untouched by fear's alarm,
Was rolling gaily at my feet
In all her youthful charm.

Why read the sad lines, Auntie Nell?
I think about them so,
I love the stories where they tell
Of happy things, you know.

Dear little child, the world to her
Is filled with hope and bliss
But soon or late Fate will confer
Its christening, woeful kiss.

We need not fear, nor fret, nor brood,
When dark days come our way
For they are part of Nature's mood
In which is shaped our clay.

We need not dwell on dark-some themes
Yet life gives them great part,
And if we will or no, Fate schemes
To bring them to each heart.

Methinks oftentimes when we are sad,
It helps us when we know
That this big world is not all glad,
That other tears must flow.

It takes some bitter from our cup,
When others drink it too,
It gives us courage to look up
And fight as others do.

Take care what pattern we would choose,
Full well we know the best,
Beneath the best, and we will lose
The charmed life's gladsome zest.

There is a gladness more mature
Than my sweet child has known.
When souls learn bravely to endure,
This gladness claims its own.

There is the soulless butterfly,
Encased in human form,
It flits through life 'til bye and bye,
It falls before the storm.

Such pluck Life's roses, just to crush,
Self lives for self alone,
What pause find they in life's mad rush
For self Love to atone.

Would I might touch these fragile things
And wake in them a soul
As beautiful as are their wings,
That they might know life's whole.

We cannot always laugh and dance—
Life has its minor strain;
Complex the melody, perchance
We needs know its refrain.

Life writes for each the perfect song,
Refraining is an art.
The master few, amid the throng,
Will take the better part.

Ofttimes another's heart is sad
When grief has bowed it low.
In sympathy our strain of glad
Should quiet gladness show.

The sad heart need not jar the gay,
The gay heart jar the sad,
Real gladness finds a noble way
To help diffuse life's glad.

A PRAYER

I do not know—I cannot tell,
I only know that all is well.
Why need I fear the day's alarm?
Thou God, will keep me from all harm.

Perhaps not just as I would choose
In Thy will, let me, my will lose.
And what Thou knowest best for me,
The best for me Oh, let me see!

Keep me from fretting and from doubt,
Turning my clouds all inside out,
Close to the stars, may I e'er live
And from their brightness may I give

Unto some weary stumbling soul
That it in peace may reach the goal.
For if some brightness I may lend
Though but a spark, 'tis Life's true end.

Thou art all light and we are thine,
Made in Thy image, part divine.
What though the scoffer sees no light
We know "Thou Art" and all is right.

A TESTING

It's just a little hard, my friend,
When strength of body fails,
When the road winds slowly to the end,
When skill no more avails.

To calmly face the bitter change,
Nor let the soul cry out,
To feel the why beyond our range,
To have no shade of doubt.

It's just a little hard, my friend,
To leave the world's great game,
To know that others aid must lend
That we must smile the same.

Ah, these are things that cut us deep,
Here's to him who can smile
And bravely put all whys to sleep
And still make life worth while.

PEACE

My name is Peace. Heart, have you sought and found me?

My dwelling place oftentimes is hid from view,
And many seek me vainly stumbling 'round me.
"There is no peace," they cry, "What shall we do?"

Why do you cry: "Oh! Peace we cannot find you?"
Full well you know, where I can ere be found,
If you but choose to break the chains that bind you
And let the soul go free that now is bound.

I steal into the heart when strife is ended,
I cannot dwell where warring forces 'bide,
The Victor who has bravely Right defended,
Shall walk with me—his soul be satisfied.

God set His seal upon each heart forever,
His image cannot wholly be effaced,
Wrong may usurp the heart then Right can never
Find room for me till Wrong has been displaced.

I wait outside the door for you to call me,
What is it, conquest, sacrifice? Yea, more
I shall require; before you dare enthrall me
Break down the idols that you now adore.

The world knows not the heart where I am master,
Nor of my presence can it be aware,
With joy I come to follow life's disaster,
I bring you strength, each victory I share.

From unknown heights my spirit has descended,
That power of which my spirit is a part
Will never fail you, leave you unattended
Unless by wilful choice you close your heart.

A MEMORY

I went through a glorious meadow,
As the sun sank down o'er the hill,
Flooding the world with its glory,
Causing my soul to stand still.

The grass was all flower besprinkled,
The odors of coming night.
Pervaded that scene of beauty,
All nature was calm and bright.

I gathered the cows together,
As they drows'ly browsed away,
To bring them home for the milking,
Which comes at the close of day.

Now Bess was young and unruly,
While Bossy was staid and slow,
But bye and bye all together,
Homeward we started to go.

The air with a sweet milk fragrance,
Was laden that summer's night,
Of that peace, that scene I am dreaming,
But time has taken its flight.

Gone is that beautiful meadow,
With its sunsets' golden glow,
The joy with the cows homeward trending
Again I never shall know.

But mem'ry thou art a treasure,
Fate may take all else away,
But thou and thy precious visions,
Thank God, they are mine for aye.

MY FATHER'S HOME

When I think of home there comes to me
My Father's wide open door
With the latchstring out so all could see
No matter if rich or poor.

It was "Come right in and feel at home,
I think this chair is the best."
His hearty greeting, where ere I roam,
Comes back with its old time zest.

From his table none was turned away,
Though the fare was scant and plain,
Selecting the best I hear him say,
"Take this, for I must abstain."

Father never relished extra things,
Unless there was enough and more.
His cheery laugh through my memory rings.
His stories, I hear them o'er.

No tramp e'er stopped at his door for bread
But left it well satisfied.
The weary traveler who sought a bed
Has oft a "God bless you" cried.

Many's the time when the meal was o'er,
With little left for a guest,
A familiar rap upon the door,
Would put our wits to a test.

But Father would cry, "Now come right in.
A trouble? why, not a mite.
Just rest a bit, it would be a sin
If we could not get a bite."

So it mattered not, many or few,
The welcome was just the same.
He questioned not, "owe I aught to you?"
He seemed not to know that game.

With a warm hand clasp he said, "Farewell"
And cried, "Now come again soon.
The more the merrier," and all could tell
That his heart with life kept tune.

I have dined in homes where all was grand,
Where fashion held full sway,
Where cold politeness, with its command,
Took all thought of home away.

In homes where selfishness had first place,
Where the rule was "give and take,"
Even up all scores, life moves apace
And the world keeps wide awake.

The old fashioned home, the old fashioned rose,
Are sweetest it seems to me;
The fragrance of both, when life shall close,
Will last through Eternity.

Somehow I fancy up there I'll hear
The Great Father's welcome cry,
"Just come right in, there is room, no fear."
And I'll know it's Home, and why.

MY JOY

Oh, I'm in the best of Spirits,
The world seems so full of real joy,
Remembered not is the Storm King
With his awful power to destroy.

Why, I'm so glad to be living,
Glad that the skies can be blue,
Glad that the friends I am loving,
Deep down in their hearts are still true.

Glad that the air I am breathing,
Is free, just as free as can be.
The air's but one of the blessings
Shared equal by you and by me.

Blessings that were I to name them
I would not know where to begin,
My soul throws open its windows
And such wonderful things rush in.

And then I just can't help smiling
For the smiles must work out somewhere,
The joy in my soul's expanding,
Till there is not room for it there.

If but one smile from my window
Could be changed to a magic key
That would open some soul's shutters
That it too might be glad and free.

And straightway open its windows
And draw in the joy that expands,
Why joy would go on expanding
I'm so glad my soul understands.

MY PONY

Why here's my beautiful pony,
Come, let me stroke your mane,
And while your soft nose nuzzles me,
I'll dream old dreams again.

I'll look into your sparkling eyes,
What they could say to me!
So much is hidden in their depths,
If you'd but let me see.

Oft as you give me glance for glance,
You seem so like a friend,
The kind of friend that never fails,
But trusts me to the end.

Well, pony, you and I are slow,
Time's left us far behind;
The auto speeding down the way
Has it been always kind?

It had to come with time's advance,
But, ah! those quiet days,
When you were friend and servant, too;
How changed are now the ways.

'Tis ever thus as life speeds on,
Replacing old with new,
One hand is reaching on, one back,
If to life's best we're true.

A LITTLE LOVE

God gave us hearts that we might love,
He gave the longing, too
For love, that other hearts may prove
Their love is deep and true.

In all the world is not one heart
But holds this great desire,
Some seek the whole, some grasp a part,
Yet all, for more aspire.

Heart-hungered surge the masses by,
Oh, does somebody care?
A little love—this is the cry
In which the great throngs share.

Why is it when the world is filled
With love, hearts find it not?
Unseen, neglected, spurned and spilled
Its greatness is forgot.

A little love, grant this to each—
Ah, me, what do we ask?
Why love, lies just within our reach,
To win it is our task.

DISAPPOINTMENTS

How do we meet disappointments?
Big ones and little ones, too,
They come when we least expect them,
Then what, oh what, do we do?

Do we fly into a tempest,
And weep and storm, rave like mad?
The words thus spoken in anger,
Can make other hearts so sad.

Or do we pout and go sulking,
A gloomy frown on our brow,
With none but a sullen answer?
We live through these things, but how?

Some meet disappointments bravely,
Rebelling not at their fate,
Trusting that somehow or somewhere,
A better part must await.

For back of our disappointments,
Is at work, an unseen power,
They are but part of the process,
Which pulls the weed from the flower.

Part too, of the mighty process,
Chiseling the what that we are,
Into the what that we may be,
If selfishness does not mar.

Forgetting self is the great key,
Which turns the frown to a smile,
And helps to unlock disappointments,
To show us things more worth while.

COURAGE

There are times when courage falters,
Times when our skys grow gray,
Ah, times when the game of gladness
Is somewhat hard to play.

It may be but for a moment,
We lose our grip, our heart,
As the load that we must carry,
Seems far too great a part.

Our smile may not fade completely,
The heart show not its pain,
The world need not know our struggles,
Self mastery means gain.

So, though we smile, we are weary,
From joy we are estranged,
The world's joy to us seems misty,
Then lo! our mood is changed.

We take up life's game in earnest,
Resolved to win or try;
Life's game is so worth the playing,
That cowardice must die.

THE FIDDLE

He stood with his fiddle in his arms,
As if it had been a child,
To him, it possessed the rarest charms,
A spirit, part tame, part wild.

Did their life's streams to each other flow
While his head close o'er it bent?
Methought that he caught a whisper low
Which told of life there unpent.

His bow knew charms which unlocked the strings,
And woke the fiddle to life.
Its soul sprang free, that clear voice still rings
Adown years of pain and strife.

A thing of mere wood, of strings, of skill,
Ye Gods, the concept of man,
That voice of fire with its power to thrill,
Lived somewhere since time began.

It found a home for its laugh, its sob,
Its heart-hungry soulful cry.
They rang through that music's rapturous throb,
Till my soul seemed free to fly.

Set free as that spirit had been freed,
I soared to a glorious sphere,
Such life, such love, ah, no mortal creed
Has ever unfolded here.

The things that I saw, and felt, and knew,
Mere words have no power to tell.
My soul came back, it was born anew—
You may call it music's spell.

It was life, yea life in perfect guise,
So noble, pure and free,
This poor clay house had not power to rise,
With space for its majesty.

The soul, though wearing a weight of chain
May loose itself for awhile,
And at Music's touch once more regain,
The light of the perfect smile.

MY THANKSGIVING GREETING

Thankful? Oh, yes, I'm thankful
And so are you, dear friend—
For life is filled with blessings.
God's love can know no end.

Though but an humble shut-in
(No part in life to play)
With the thorns I find sweet roses
All strewn along my way.

God knew when He sent the roses
How sweet and bright they'd prove;
He knew, though the thorns might pierce me,
Each pain would heal with love.

These buds of human kindness
Have wreathed me all about,
I wear them like a garland—
They banish every doubt.

Dear friend, you placed a rosebud
Within my garland fair;
And it has been unfolding
'Till now, it's grown most rare.

Some day I'll take my roses
All up to Him above.
He'll smile on every rose leaf
Of pure unselfish love.

ART

The concert room, it was crowded,
The singer ended her song.
In her shining robe and jewels
She left the applauding throng.

I sat withdrawn in a corner,
Absorbed in the grand array
Of wealth, of culture, of fashion,
The best this world could display.

The song had been a real triumph,
A wonderful work of Art.
But art, had it failed its mission,
Left this emptiness of heart?

I looked away through the window,
Where countless stars were agleam.
Where a great white moon was shining.
That sky was an artist's dream.

For the King of all great artists
Had spread the canvass of time,
The scenes He was ever changing,
The pictures were all sublime.

No flaw in the scheme of color.
Arrangement most perfect, too.
For in all the color blending
Each star was still shining true.

I closed my eyes in deep reverie.
Perfection for ear, for eye,
And yet beyond mere perfection
Was the memory of that sky

Which had stirred my inmost being,
Awakening something there,
A depth of longing, of vision,
A hope to fulfill somewhere.

I passed from the room, went onward,
Through the quiet streets along,
But paused, a low voice was singing
Softly, a Lullaby song.

A Mother sat by a window,
A little child at her breast.
Her song was so sweet, so soothing,
The child had been lulled to rest.

I passed along through the night scenes.
The Mother's song, and that sky
Seemed blending themselves together,
Though I scarce could solve the why.

What had all my study brought me?
Real art is beyond it all,
Beyond this world's best perfection
It answers a higher call.

We clothe it in form of beauty,
Of every varying type.
The rose in the soft breeze swaying,
The strawberry just turned ripe.

The purple hills at the sunset,
The meadow when kissed by rain,
The brooklet's musical murmur,
The rustling of fields of grain.

The songs, the pictures of nature,
Man would copy with his art.
But what means his poor perfection
When it fails to reach the heart?

When it fails to bring a message,
A message from heart to heart,
And unlock the soul's closed chambers
Then to me it is not art.

WOMAN'S STATION

Why this talk of Woman's Station?
Words make not the slightest change,
When the Lord of all creation
Gave to her a woman's range.

Station is this world's poor measure,
Man and woman make life's whole;
Sharing of its greatest treasure—
Who has power to measure soul?

Each without the other failing,
As all fails when incomplete,
Nature's edict cease assailing,
Why this mad wish to compete?

Why not travel life together,
Working out life's greatest plan?
Why not recognize the tether
Binding woman close to man?

Man's friend, sister, daughter, mother,
Ah, what meaning in each word.
In this kinship to each other,
All the depths of life are stirred.

She who shrinks from full surrender,
Where surrender is her part,
Will the wrath of fate engender,
Dwarfing, blasting, woman's heart.

And he who a lord's part chooses,
Where dominion is not due,
All the pride of manhood loses,
When he plays life's game untrue.

Prate no more of rank or station,
Destiny will make that clear.
In the great scales of creation
Every balance shall appear.

There's an hour when all are equal,
None escape the final call,
When we wait to know life's sequel,
There is oneness in us all.

THE UNPLEASANT TASK

When the unpleasant task knocks at our door
Do we coldly and calmly look it o'er
The while we are pondering if it is best
To invite it in and make it our guest?

Or leaving it standing outside the door
Just say, "Room for it, someone else has more,"
Then carelessly, thoughtlessly pass it by
And heed not its plaintive dejected cry?

So the unpleasant task, knocks, knocks in vain,
Will none bid it enter, bid it remain,
None make it a home, give to it a smile,
None say: "after all such tasks are worthwhile?"

The task so unpleasant we shrink away,
How have we the heart on others to lay
Though they may seem stronger, can we be sure
That what daunts our courage, they can endure?

And the unpleasant task may be our test
To bring to repletion in us the best,
Accepted with patience, cheerfully done
Its crown may be greatest ere task has won.

MY HARP

Methinks my heart is like a harp
On which the world can play;
Sometimes a blow comes quick and sharp,
And as it dies away,—

The string so roughly touched resounds,
With quivering hollow pain,
At last to quiet it rebounds
'Till it is touched again.

Anon, a gentle hand will glide
So softly o'er my strings
That every discord there will hide
While rapture through me rings.

Would I might sound my sweetest strains
To all who pass me by.
Would they might sense that spite of chains
My soul has wings to fly.

Why must I vibrate at the will
Of all I chance to meet?
Yet, some must kiss the cross to fill
For me Life's cup, so sweet.

But there are few, yea, very few
Who prize me for myself.
Each luring rival, gay and new,
Becomes the chosen elf.

Still from my corner I look out
In life, I have small part.
What use am I? Ah, there's the doubt.
Have I no claim on art?

I do not know. I cannot tell.
I wait the Master's hand
To touch my strings, that they may swell,
Vibrating His command.

My quivering strings, until that hour,
At each rude touch must quake.
One day, I know, the Master's power
My best self shall awake.

NOVEMBER

November, gray November,
Thou'rt a step between
The glories of October
And Christmas evergreen.

The bright-hued leaves of autumn
Have flitted from the trees.
The birds are going southward,
There are no flowers to freeze.

The dreamy Indian summer,
Entices us to stray
Before the winter snowdrifts
Shall come to block our way.

But best of all November,
Thanksgiving always brings,
With pumpkin pie and turkey,
And heaps and heaps of things.

The King of all these good things
Looks down with smiles, I know
Upon the happy children
Who frolic to and fro.

For in the hearts of children,
True gratitude is found,
Though they've no words to phrase it;
But when the years go around,

And we reach life's November,
If we have reaped and stored,
We'll have cause for Thanksgiving
That in life's game we scored.

MY CROSSING

I walk beside my Pilot, hand in hand,
For He has come on shore to lead me on.
In blessed peace together we shall stand
Where yet the sunset glory is not gone.

Where yet it lingers with its radiant glow
To make the river beautiful to see,
The river that twixt then and now doth flow,
Which separates now from Eternity.

So slowly tread my feet beside this stream,
Whilst others cross it where the waves run high.
Is it all dark to them without a gleam
Of glorious light when wings their parting sigh?

I look into my Pilot's pitying face,
Amazed am I that they should breast the foam.
With arms outstretched He offers saving grace,
But they would not that He should lead them home.

Through restless currents they are crossing fast
But in their soul is naught of rest or peace.
Clinging to loves of life until the last—
Unwilling ties of earth to give release.

Unwilling too, to take my Pilot's hand
And trust their crossing to His loving care.
Alone, they answer to the great command
That prince and peasant both alike must share.

The sun is setting where I soon must cross,
Majestic is the glory all about.
For me beyond this life can there be loss?
My faith, my trust, my hope remove all doubt.

So when the hour of crossing comes to me
May I surrender all, be unafraid.
My soul must rise triumphant when 'tis free,
For freedom's price, my Pilot! it is paid.

WORRY

The thing which we call worry,
It surely is a King;
Because we pay it homage
As to no other thing.

Such trifling circumstances
Arise in each day's round.
Then in a trice, we're floundering
With eyes turned to the ground.

We wring our hands in anguish,
All in a whirl our brain,
So feverish, so excited,
That thought no power can gain.

Like some wild restless creature
We pace about and fret,
Thus finding no solution.
How is our balance set?

We use imagination
To color every scene.
Sometimes we grow despondent.
Our suffering, it is keen.

With nerves o'er strained to breaking
We find recourse in tears.
Or, in despair, go wailing,
Enlarging on our fears.

Again we brood in silence,
And hug some secret tight,
Which gnaws away our life power,
And leaves on us a blight.

What has this king accomplished,
By his tyrannic rule,
Upsetting thus our kingdom,
And making us his fool?

His power, in our undoing,
Because we bend the knee,
Is matchless, would we own it,
For ah, we are not free.

Yea, free, there is the secret,
But what is freedom's realm?
Each makes his own decision,
What power shall take his helm?

Our lives we can make peaceful,
Gain perfect self control,
And plan in quiet wisdom,
To reach a chosen goal.

Conserving all our forces
For use in time of need.
Not wasting them on worry
To self destruction feed.

The day we conquer worry,
And rob him of his throne,
Refusing further homage,
That day, we claim our own.

That day we win our kingship,
With Worry for our slave.
How changed becomes life's outlook,
Oh, to be kings, so brave!

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

Again the Christmas spirit
Has set all hearts aglow,
Its magic touch has wakened
The best that life can know.

My poor heart feels the wonder,
So small, so frail am I;
I marvel at the glory
That lifts my soul so high.

Through friends like you this glory
Has made Earth, Heaven here;
You've shown the Christmas spirit
To me throughout the year.

What is the Christmas spirit,
That makes the holly bright,
That shines in children's faces,
And gleams through stars at night?

Ah me, what is this spirit,
That throb of mother heart
As she divides her treasure
To give each child a part?

And what that wondrous spirit
That makes big hearts so wide,
They draw in all the needy
God's blessings to divide?

What is this love born spirit
That makes friend think of friend?
Dear Lord, Thou art the Spirit,
Thy love can know no end.

My soul is stirred with rapture,
I hear the angels sing.
Good-will and peace is loving,
All hail, to love's real King.

MY CROSS

'The scales of life an even balance hold,'
This adage has to me so oft been told,
But when the storm in fury o'er me breaks,
My anguished heart all torn and bleeding quakes.

And I cry out, I know it cannot be
That others suffer what has come to me.
And then I look about for lives more blest,
Whose cross seems light, whilst I am so oppressed.

And weighing each I look the crosses o'er
To find if one is light or one weighs more.
Which would I choose, were I to have my choice?
To change with some would make my heart rejoice.

At last I found a cross which pleased me well,
Bedecked with gems, whose value none could tell,
But when I lifted it, the gems I found
Seemed hewn from stone, they weighed me to the ground.

How strange! that cross seemed fairer than the rest,
Can it then be, God always knows the best?
That for each loss, He some new grace bestows,
I questioned long, ere I could say: "He Knows."

There was a cross so roughly carved, so plain,
But somehow at its sight I felt disdain.
Alas! Oh bitter thought, lives still my pride,
When on my cross I thought it crucified.

Another cross I found to my desire,
But in its heart there burned a smouldering fire
Whose torturing rays would scorch me thru and thru,
I laid it down and sighed "It would not do."

The lightest crosses and the fairest, why
In every one did something hidden lie,
That when I fain would claim one for my own,
The treasures round my cross to me were shown?

Unsatisfied, rebellious still at heart,
I cried: "I know some have the better part"—
And then into my heart there came a fear,
If at my call, an angel should appear,

And change my life into the life of one,
Whom I had envied, when it all was done.
When I should see my treasures slip away
Would what I'd gain, for what I'd lose, repay?

My sacred friendships, they seemed Heaven born,
What would life be when these had all been shorn?
My friendships and the deeper loves of life,
Have grown, maturing with my joy and strife.

And then my soul, this other self of mine,
Its understanding of a power divine,
What if the soul whose cross I'd choose to bear,
This blessed fellowship sought not to share?

My knowledge, wisdom, by the years inwrought,
How could I change these for another's thought?
Lo, I who long had cried: "Give us fair play"—
I'd change my cross, but take the best away.

Oh human justice! hide thy face in shame
Or call thyself by some less honored name.
A higher wisdom thou hast questioned long,
Could'st thou then stoop to aught thou callest wrong?

My quest was o'er, at last I found content,
Though many weary, doubting years I'd spent,
I found not one with whom I'd change my cross,
The gain would bring to me a greater loss.

I kissed my cross with victory in my soul,
Peace wrapped me 'round to lead me to life's goal.
There where my cross shall slip away from me,
My soul will claim its own, when it is free.

AN UNSEEN POWER

There is an unseen Power which holds me,
A Power in which I trust,
A hidden Power that shapes and moulds me,
That makes each balance just.

A Power on which my soul is leaning,
All through the day, the night;
From thence my soul is ever gleaning,
Life's treasures rare and bright.

A Power which gives a peace unbroken,
Through every battle's roar,
A joy that tongue hath not yet spoken,
A hope with wings to soar.

There is a Power in all, above all,
Believe not if you will,
But this great Power will rule all, love all,
Each destiny fulfill.

Oh, unseen Power, I bow adoring,
Such matchless strength and grace,
More worthy, is my soul's imploring,
That I may see thy face.

THE DIVINE PLAN

We plan for self and for others,
The while they are planning too,
Then fate intervenes with changes,
Ah fate, which dream will come true?

For out of the unknown future,
Silently reaches a hand
Which weaves the web of life's fabric,
Your life and mine, strand on strand.

Still we go on with our planning
Hoping and striving to gain,
Sometimes our purpose is noble,
Sometimes we scheme but in vain.

No matter how great the genius
Which seeks to thwart the Divine,
Though for a season it triumphs,
There comes an hour of decline.

The mind of man is so finite,
To infinitude compared;
But through unity of spirit
Divinity may be shared.

Ah, would we but claim our birthright,
The spark of Divine within
And give to it full expansion,
To angels we might be kin.

THE CERTAINTY OF FATE

When we think a wrong we would not reveal,
It engenders fear and doubt,
When we tell a lie we would fain conceal,
By and by the truth works out.

When we steal from another seeking gain,
In process of time we find
The coveted treasure cannot remain,
As the wheels of justice grind.

When we do a crime, though we hide it well,
It follows us all the while,
And its haunting fear makes of life a hell,
Though we seem to wear a smile.

And the time will come just as sure as fate,
The hidden crime will be known.
The adage is true, we learn if we wait,
We shall reap as we have sown.

We may try to cheat, to thwart, to deceive,
Use man's most ingenious art,
But it all circles round till we receive
Each boomerang back to our heart.

We may dip our souls in dishonor's dye,
Then purity's robe will not do,
To hide our stain when we virtue defy,
Each stain on the soul shows through.

We may place our reason upon a throne,
And worship it for a god,
The world will move on leaving us alone,
To resist truth's chastening rod.

For the gods of the fool, the gods of the wise,
Shall each find their rightful place.
But the hope in the soul which never dies,
Will spur us to lives of grace.

No thought, unbelief, disregard of Fate--
Vain man, frail man, has he won?
Back of all, through all, and in every state
Lo, Thou art, "Thy will be done."

OUR SACRED TRUST

Would it be right were a bird not to sing,
When he has a song in his throat?
Would a vine flourish if it could not cling,
But was tossed on the breeze afloat?

Would it be right if the sun would not shine,
And would leave the world in the dark?
We too, are a part of the scheme divine,
And the world cannot lose one spark.

What would you think of a God given voice,
That would hide its music away,
Think but of reward and use freedom's choice,
So selfishly day after day?

What would you think of the scholar, the sage,
Who would lock himself in his cell
When the masses have need of pen and page,
To teach them, God loves, all is well?

What would you think of the artist who cries:
“Oh, creation’s art is so fine,
The best I could do the world would despise,
I’ll bury these wild dreams of mine?”

The world needs each talent, the small, the great,
The service of plain humble hands.
We, like our Creator, must create,
Though our worlds seem small as sea sands.

Over and over the cry comes to me
From someone adrift on life’s tide:
“Why should I struggle, the world needs not me,
I would not here longer abide?

“I shall go out to that world I know not,
I am weary, I fain would rest,
No one will miss me, I’ll soon be forgot,”
Poor soul! did it know what was best?

Life with its intricate phases and claims,
Is a sacred trust we should keep,
For somehow, yea, somewhere a spark upflames,
When long, long it may seem to sleep.

HER SUNSET FACE

In my vision, I see a maiden’s face
In life’s morning, and all is well.
Midst the hills and the vales she grew in grace,
Her heart no dark secrets could tell.

So simple, so true, so pure, and so strong,
She looked to the lad on his steed.
He wooed her, and made of their life a song,
For they lived faith and trust indeed.

In that home a welcome the children found,
Though but little it could provide.
Content as they labored, the years went round,
And they learned fortune's smile to bide.

And then came the sound of the bugle call,
And his country called him away.
He offered his all, she gave her all,
Now which was the bravest that day?

For he midst the din of the battle's roar,
Knew not if his life would be spared,
To go to his loved ones at home once more,
And know joys that he once had shared.

And she knew the waiting, the dreading pain,
For what word would the morrow bring?
But her children's needs bade her more strength gain,
To go on despite her heart's sting.

Oh many's the ache when the war is o'er,
When the powers of life have fled.
But she labored on when he toiled no more,
To provide for their daily bread.

New loves called the children all one by one
Till once more sat alone, these two.
He a child of weakness—his day was done,
And she, ever faithful and true.

Then he went away, he would come no more,
She looked up in her faith and love.
She felt when his strong pure soul dipped the oar,
He would wait her, somewhere above.

So she faltered not—a sustaining hand
Upheld her, adown life's decline,
Her sunset life was so peaceful, so grand,
As she leaned on that Strength Divine.

For her perfect day was ending at last,
With no cloud to bedim its light,
And her life of noble service was past,
But its traces were clear and bright.

Then her soul reached out with an upward lift
To enter the spirit's embrace.
Her God smiling down while the clouds were rift—
Left His smile on her sunset face.

MY EVENTIDE

The evening time of life is drawing near,
Is there ought I may do while day is clear?
A word of courage may I give perchance
A smile of trust, a faithful upward glance?

May I point out the rocks that pierced my feet,
The bitter cup I drank that looked so sweet?
Some pitfalls may I show while yet 'tis day,
Some quicksands that lie hid along the way?

Life's eventide has found me weak and spent,
So like a useless reed the storm has bent.
What if this house, wherein my soul must dwell
Is but a wreck, I know that all is well.

The palace of the King is not the King,
Though rent its walls yet may he laugh and sing,
His power, his throne, his title did not fall
Throughout his kingdom, he is King to all.

If kings may rule through havoc, then the soul,
Is not it greater fraction of a whole
That cannot die, but must expand at last
And break the shackles which has held it fast?

These prison bars of mine were forged for me,
For me alone, I sought and found the key
Which changed my prison to a palace fair
None may usurp nor can I make one heir.

For each must find the key that fits his bar
And gain the strength to make it swing ajar.
'Tis given us to show another light
But freedom comes to each through our own might.

The rocks that pierced me, and the cup I drank,
The pitfalls and the quicksands where I sank
Another's feet may pass in safety by,
Nor shall they need my watchful, warning cry.

But in some place where I saw naught of harm
Another may find dangers or alarm.
Feign would I spare all those who follow me,
But each must work out his own destiny.

DAY DREAMS

Now what about your day dreams?
Do you dream dreams, sometimes?
The kind akin to moonbeams,
That ring life's sweetest chimes.

Anon, when life grows weary,
From duty's constant call,
When your outlook looks dreary,
With no heart in it all.

When life to you seems narrow,
While other lives are wide,
When, like the humble sparrow,
For you God must provide.

You hear the lark's sweet singing,
As it soars up so high.
You catch the notes clear ringing,
The while, you wonder why.

When strength of body failing,
Brings weakness and despair,
No human skill availing
To free the heart from care.

Or when your fond ambition
Gives place, though unfulfilled
To unloved work's tradition
With aspiration killed.

When you would fain have traveled,
And seen God's world out-spread.
Life's mysteries unraveled
When all such hopes are dead.

When home holds no attraction,
Its bright dreams vanish vain.
Your heart, in its reaction,
Is breaking with the pain.

When friends whom you have cherished,
Have left you all alone.
While faith and trust have perished,
Left naught which can atone.

When love, life's choicest treasure,
A stone has come to be,
When life holds no real pleasure,
When no outlet you see.

Your day dreams, what about them?
Do you drive them away?
As bitterly you doubt them,
And give to them no sway.

I wonder, yea, I wonder,
Who is so cold and grim,
But what fancy can sunder,
This mystic vale for him.

The scientist deciding
If dreams are good or ill
Will not change their abiding
The place which they can fill.

For when the storm is raging,
The room is cold and drear,
These scenes will find assuaging
Where dream souls know no fear.

On fancy's wings you're flying,
To lands of pure delight.
Your cruel fate defying,
Where all is fair and bright.

Your discontent, your fretting,
Life's daily humdrum round,
Will find a sweet forgetting,
When fancy, wings has found.

No more you are divided
From lives of wider scope.
Your dream world has provided
A fairyland of hope.

And beauty, God's expression
Of life and love, you'll find
Will there have no repression
But equal power of mind.

And there all that you would be
Or would have known, or been
Will be as real as could be
In that dream world of then.

There, music is the sweetest,
In it you have a part.
And time goes by the fleetest,
In that dream land of art.

There friendships are the truest.
Love is a thing divine.
There sorrows are the fewest,
Put by this day dream wine.

Behold! You are returning
To real life, and its care,
But in the soul is burning
A light which all can share.

Your place which once seemed lowly,
Through dream eyes is enlarged,
New joy in life comes slowly,
While new hope is surcharged.

Your home becomes a palace,
Because you make it so.
And when you drink love's chalice
No sweeter cup you know.

In day dreams we are kindly,
We give the world our best.
We trust each other blindly,
Know not suspicion's test.

Our soul there finds expansion,
We forge life's fetters, yea,
The rooms in real life's mansion,
Are furnished our own way.

I've come to the conclusion
That life is small or great.
As we make its solution,
And small or large create.

Alas, if day dream glory
Increases discontent,
Or fails to make Life's story
To read, as Heaven sent.

But, if day dreams can teach us
Life is not commonplace,
Life's fullness, it will reach us,
And leave on us its trace.

FEELING SORRY

There's a realm of feeling sorry,
Which we pass thru, you and I,
Sometimes we may call it pity
And its gate is: Wonder why?

There's so much to make us sorry,
Wrongs, unrighted everywhere,
Crime and pain and weary heartache
And the cry: "Can God be there?"

We are sorry for the childhood
Which is dwarfed thru Fate's control,
Sorry for the men and women
Robbed of what helps make life whole.

Sorry for such lack of knowledge,
For the want of wisdom too,
Sorry for the lack of spirit
Which makes brave souls dare and do.

Sorry there must still be prisons;
How can men play with the chance
Of a prison life I wonder!
Will this change with time's advance?

Prison walls may shut out freedom
But the mind and soul are free
To redeem the past, to conquer
And a hero yet to be.

There are many kinds of prisons,
Real and unreal, weak and strong,
Would all prisoners might be victors,
Right impulse might outweigh wrong.

When we feel another's pity
We respond if it seems real,
But it often means so little
That disdain we must conceal.

For while they are feeling sorry
We are feeling sorry too,
How oft would you change positions
With the ones who pity you?

When our hearts are filled with pity
For another's pain or woe,
As our spirits hold communion
Into fuller life we grow.

In the quicksands of self-pity
There is danger for us all,
When for self we're feeling sorry
Let's take care, lest we should fall—

Lest we live behind a shadow
Which shuts out hope's guiding light
Counting o'er our ills, our losses
Letting day turn into night.

Envying all whose path seems brighter,
Fretting, chafing at our lot,
Digging our own graves with vengeance,
Crying: "Lord, Thou hast forgot "

Why, for self should we be sorry?
Cowards faint beside the way
But the brave look up, press onward,
And at last they win the day.

HEART TO HEART TALK TO THE READER

My little book of verses
Claims not earth's fame nor gold,
Far different is its purpose
As these lines will unfold.

They're only simple verses—
An humble heart's o'erflow—
A heart, whose pent up waters
Life's sweet and bitter know.

But if by this o'erflowing
One tiny drop may fall
Into a heart that needs it,
My songs will serve their call.

The heart that long hath suffered,
That plays life's quiet game,
Heeds not the call to battle,
To win a crown of fame.

For close beside the river
Which flows twixt then and now
The flowers of fame seem withered,
A weight, upon the brow.

How was it with Earth's greatest?
With pride, they wore Fame's crown,
Their souls evolved real treasures
But all else, they laid down.

Laid down beside the river
What meaning has a name?
A name, Ye Gods! 'tis service
Which wins eternal fame.

To some much power is given
Life waves to set a stir;
No human power can measure
The good such lives confer.

So small has been my service
I wonder, will desire
Be weighed as kin to serving
When nobly we aspire?

How I have longed for service!
I tremble at the thought.
This pathway I avoided
For other work I sought.

The Master of the Vineyard
May call to me one day:
“Come hither, wilful servant
For you, I have small pay.”

“When but a child, I gave you
One talent, only one—
For long, long years you hid it,
What service have you done?”

And faintly I made answer:
“I tried to live a smile,
Because my cross was heavy
No task seemed more worthwhile.”

Vain thought! All should live sunshine,
What e're our lot may be,
While doing other service,
To fulfill Life's decree.

My course will soon be ended,
Forgive my empty years.
Where I have been a coward,
Oh! understand my fears.

The wild rose in the forest,
Unseen by eye of man,
Blooms out its life of beauty
In keeping with its plan.

And, on the ground beneath it
The tiny blade of grass
Lives out its simple service
Unknown among its class.

Unlike the faithful grass blade
I failed to do my part.
Forgive, my death blind spirit,
The slumber of my heart.

To every call to service
I answered "No, not I,
There are so many worthy
The world will pass me by."

At last the call came clearer,
In meekness I arose
And cried, "Here I am, Master,
I'll serve thee till life's close."

Tho' lowly as the grass blade
Unnoticed by the throngs,
Accept my simple service
And make my humble songs—

Bring cheer, resolve, or courage
To one who fails to see,
Through all Life's seeming contrasts
The whys of destiny.

Perchance, caught in Life's meshes
Some weary soul stands still
In doubt, if it is needed
The world's scheme to fulfill

Build o'er my wrecks, its victory,
For not one has the right
To cheat the world of service,
To falter in Life's fight.

How oft great depths of impulse
Are stirred by some weak hand,
And life waves set in motion
Whose power none understand.

Be not content with drifting,
When life might be worthwhile,
Shun not your task then surely
You owe the world your smile.

